

of the British Isles, 1984) the species is well established in the Channel Islands but there are only three previous records from the British mainland. I have been unable to trace any records of this species since 1984.— D.A. YOUNG, 32 Valley Road, Burghfield Common, Reading, Berkshire.

Abundance of *Omphaloscelis lunosa* Haw., the Lunar Underwing (Lep.: Noctuidae) in 1989 and 1990

I read with interest R. Fairclough's note in the *Entomologist's Record* (103: 40) relating to the abundance of *Omphaloscelis lunosa* at Leigh, Surrey. At Ninfield, East Sussex, this is also a common species. However, in 1989 on the 21st, 24th and 25th September, this species was so numerous that I noted the species as abundant (not having the time to count numbers more accurately). Only on 23rd September did I estimate the number of individuals present, recording a figure of 450+.

In 1990 I was only able to run the trap on two occasions in late September; on the 28th, when I again recorded the species as abundant, and on 29th September when I conservatively estimated that 2,100 individuals were present.— M. PARSONS, The Forge, Russells Green, Ninfield, East Sussex.

***Meligethes haemorrhoidalis* Förster (Col.: Nitidulidae) in Surrey**

Two specimens of this species which was recently added to the British List (Parry, J.A., 1990, *Entomologist's mon. Mag.*, 126: 237) were collected on 31.iii.1991 from flowers of *Narcissus* by a stream on Bookham Common (TQ1255). Their identity was confirmed by dissection. Parry records the beetle from Southern England, with the site of discovery in Kent and one assumes that the above find is part of a continuing spread. I thank the National Trust for permission to collect at Bookham.— D.A. PRANCE, 209 Peregrine Road, Sunbury, Middlesex TW16 6JJ.

***Argyrotaenia ljugiana* (Thunb.) — a surprising foodplant**

I was interested to read the notes by A.A. Allen (*Ent. Rec.* 102: 8) and C.W. Plant (*ibid.* 188) since the species had become very common in Grays, Essex over the last few years. It was particularly common near the entrance to Grays Chalk Quarry where much Sainfoin grew, and I was keen to discover whether this might be a foodplant but never managed to establish it as such.

On 20th April 1991 I was collecting leaves of *Pyracantha* from a site in West Thurrock as part of a survey concerning the spread of *Phyllonorycter leucographella* (Zell.). The same afternoon when I had returned home amidst snow showers I was surprised to find that a moth had already emerged — the more so since it was *A. ljugiana*. Two days later, 22nd April, a further specimen emerged from leaves of *Pyracantha* from Hackney, London E8, where they had been collected on 10th April. It

seems most unlikely that this is the only foodplant in urban areas so this species is probably polyphagous on a wider range of plants than was formerly thought.— DAVID AGASSIZ, Centre for Population Biology, Imperial College at Silwood Park, Ascot, Berks SL5 7BS.

BOOK REVIEW

A Coleopterist's Handbook by Jonathan Cooter. 3rd edition 294pp. Boards. The Amateur Entomologists' Society. 1990. £14.00.

Like earlier editions, this multi-author handbook aims "to give advice and guidance" to those wanting to become coleopterists. About one third is devoted to the practicalities of finding, identifying and preserving beetles, about a third to accounts of beetle families as they occur in Britain and the remainder to the matters of beetle larvae and their rearing and to conservation as it relates to coleopterists and other entomologists. There is a glossary of terms and an index to beetle genera referred to in the text.

Perhaps of most value to the beginner will be the accounts of where and how to look for beetles and how to catch them. The use of a number of different nets and traps is described and the various natural and man-made habitats of beetles catalogued. Caution is needed, however, before some of the advice offered is accepted. Thus, the glycol-based (anti-freeze) solution recommended for use in pitfall traps will make many specimens so rigid that they will be virtually useless as cabinet specimens. Again, the suggestion that trays used in a flight interception trap inspected daily need only corrugated card to trap intercepted beetles is unlikely to be satisfactory; many intercepted beetles dropping into the trays will simply fly off again or crawl out when it gets dark. Moreover, it is going to be much more stressful harvesting small, live beetles such as ptilids and pselaphids from 20 or so pieces of corrugated card every day than picking them out from an aqueous medium in the usual way. As far as identifications go, the required equipment and books are listed and there is a clear description of the process of examining beetle genitalia, a cornerstone of modern taxonomy. There is also an excellent account of the conventions used in scientific nomenclature.

The section providing accounts of beetle families is perhaps the least satisfactory part of the handbook. You cannot really describe beetle families for beginners without adequate illustrations which, these days, means colour. The very few illustrations of adults beetles are undoubtedly excellent in detail but they lack scales so that a beginner will not know what size of creature is depicted. The coverage of the different families is very uneven, no doubt because different authors were involved. Thus, accounts of some families include long bibliographies or list of species not included by Joy in his well known handbook or accounts of the status of species in Britain while others provide none of these. One cannot help feeling that it would have been better to refer beginners wishing an overview of beetle